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	DODE-00	DATE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00
	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9402
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 002311

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER
LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY
PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS
NAIROBI FOR TERRY PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/01/11
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE RULING PARTY HANDILY WINS KEY BY-ELECTION

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REF: A) HARARE 2239, B) HARARE 1992

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES AUBREY HOOKS FOR
REASONS: 1.5 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) RULING PARTY CANDIDATE AND MASHONALAND CENTRAL GOVERNOR ELLIOT MANYIKA SOUNDLY DEFEATED OPPOSITION CANDIDATE ELLIOT PFEBVE IN THE PARLIAMENTARY BY-ELECTION HELD JULY 28-29 IN BINDURA DISTRICT. THE RULING ZANU-PF WIDENED ITS MARGIN OF VICTORY CONSIDERABLY OVER LAST JUNE'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION, IN WHICH THE MDC LOST BY JUST OVER 2,000 VOTES. MANYIKA POLLED 15,864 VOTES AGAINST 9,456 FOR PFEBVE, AN INCREASE OF 4,300 VOTES IN THE RULING ZANU-PF'S MARGIN OF VICTORY OVER LAST YEAR. THE BY-ELECTION WAS HELD TO REPLACE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MINISTER AND ZANU-PF COMMISSAR BORDER GEZI, WHO DIED IN AN APRIL CAR ACCIDENT. THE TURNOUT OF 25,849 REGISTERED VOTERS WAS VIRTUALLY THE SAME AS LAST JUNE. THE DOMESTIC MONITORING ORGANIZATION ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK (ZESN) TOLD US THAT 56,651 VOTERS WERE REGISTERED IN THE DISTRICT FOR THE ELECTION, A 6.5 PERCENT INCREASE OVER THE 53,191 REGISTERED LAST JUNE. RINDAI CHIPFUNDE, COORDINATOR OF ZESN, SAID THE SIZE OF THE INCREASE IN REGISTERED VOTERS RAISED EYEBROWS. SHE SPECULATED THAT MOST OF THE NEWLY-REGISTERED VOTERS WERE RECENTLY-RESETTLED PEASANT FARMERS, MOST OF WHOM SUPPORT ZANU-PF. (COMMENT: THE INCREASE COULD ALSO BE ATTRIBUTED TO REGISTRATION CAMPAIGNS BY BOTH ZANU-PF AND MDC, BUT NOT TO DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS OR ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE REGION. END COMMENT.)

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¶2. (C) THE POLLING DAYS WERE MARRED BY A NUMBER OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS. THE INDEPENDENT "DAILY NEWS" REPORTED THAT ON 28 JULY, 21 MDC SUPPORTERS WERE ABDUCTED BY ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS, AN MDC VEHICLE WAS STONED, AND FOUR OTHER SUPPORTERS WERE BEATEN AND HOSPITALIZED. THE PRESS REPORTED THAT ON 29 JULY, POLICE DETAINED MDC CANDIDATE PFEBVE AND 25 OTHERS FOR ALLEGEDLY GETTING TOO CLOSE TO A POLLING STATION. MDC PRESIDENT MORGAN TSVANGIRAI TOLD US JULY 31 THAT ZANU-PF USED LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE INTO BINDURA CONSTITUENCY, ESTABLISHED BASES THAT WERE USED BY WAR VETERANS AND PARTY THUGS TO BEAT AND INTIMIDATE VOTERS, AND POSTED 200 ZANU-PF YOUTHS OUTSIDE EVERY POLLING CENTER, A PRESENCE THAT WAS INEVITABLY INTIMIDATING TO VOTERS. HE ADDED THAT IN LIGHT OF THESE EFFORTS, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN NAIVE TO EXPECT THE ELECTION TO GO ANY OTHER WAY. THE MDC HAD EXPECTED TO RECEIVE ABOUT 40 PERCENT OF THE VOTES (ITS CANDIDATE RECEIVED 36 PERCENT), AND TSVANGIRAI SAID THE MDC WOULD NOT CONTEST THE RESULT.

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MDC ELECTIONS DIRECTOR PAUL THEMBA NYATHI TOLD US EARLIER THAT AN OPPOSITION WIN IN BINDURA COULD HAVE SPARKED A MORE HARSH AND WIDESPREAD CRACKDOWN ON THE MDC, OR HAVE CONVINCED ZANU-PF NOT TO HOLD MORE ELECTIONS AS THEY COULD NOT WIN THEM. THE SEVERAL MONTHS PRECEDING THE ELECTION WERE BADLY MARRED BY POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION, MAINLY AT THE EXPENSE OF MDC SUPPORTERS (REF B). HUNDREDS OF ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS ATTACKED TSVANGIRAI'S MOTORCADE ON 22 JULY AS HE TRIED TO CAMPAIGN FOR PFEVBE (REF A).

13. (C) COMMENT: THE BINDURA VOTE, THE FIRST
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PARLIAMENTARY BY-ELECTION IN NEARLY SEVEN MONTHS, WAS A CRUCIAL TEST FOR ZIMBABWE'S TWO MAIN PARTIES. THE RESULT DEMONSTRATED THAT THERE ARE STILL A LARGE NUMBER OF RURAL RESIDENTS WILLING TO VOTE FOR ZANU-PF; A HEAVY INVESTMENT IN PATRONAGE AND GOVERNMENT HANDOUTS BY BINDURA'S FORMER MP, BORDER GEZI, CERTAINLY HELPED MAINTAIN SUPPORT AMONG THE RULING PARTY'S CORE CADRE IN THE DISTRICT. DIRTY TRICKS, SUCH AS REGISTERING NON-RESIDENT VOTERS AND TURNING AWAY SUSPECTED MDC SUPPORTERS FROM THE POLLING BOOTH, PROBABLY PLAYED A ROLE AS WELL. WE SUSPECT THAT VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION WERE ALSO SIGNIFICANT FACTORS. MORE THAN HALF OF ALL REGISTERED VOTERS STAYED HOME, AND THE NUMBER OF MDC VOTES FELL BY 16 PERCENT FROM LAST YEAR. ZANU-PF'S ABILITY TO CONCENTRATE ITS INTIMIDATION MACHINERY ON A SINGLE DISTRICT ACCOUNTS FOR MUCH OF THE SWING IN VOTES FROM LAST YEAR. THE MDC LIKELY WILL NOT CONSIDER THE BINDURA RESULT A SIGNIFICANT BLOW TO ITS PRESIDENTIAL PROSPECTS, GIVEN THAT MASHONALAND HAS LONG BEEN A ZANU-PF STRONGHOLD. MDC SECRETARY-GENERAL WELSHMAN NCUBE TOLD US RECENTLY THAT THE OPPOSITION PARTY NEEDS TO GARNER 40 PERCENT OF THE VOTES IN MASHONALAND TO WIN THE PRESIDENCY.

14. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: THE ELECTION OF ELLIOT

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MANYIKA PLACES HIM ON THE NATIONAL STAGE, AND HIS SEAT IN PARLIAMENT IS A LIKELY STEPPING STONE TO NATIONAL OFFICE. PRESIDENT MUGABE STILL HAS SEVERAL VACANT CABINET POSITIONS, AND MANYIKA'S ABILITY TO HELP ZANU-PF SECURE A CORE AREA OF SUPPORT MAY WELL BE REWARDED WITH AN APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT CREATION, GEZI'S OLD JOB. END COMMENT.

HOOKS

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